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Divine Truth Practically Illustrated.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

* 7551-443

THE DEDICATION

OF THE

ORTHODOX CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HOUSE

IN

MEDFIELD, APRIL 17, 1832.

BY ARTHUR GRANGER,

Minister of the Gospel.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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This Sermon is committed to the public for the sole purpose of doing good in the establishment of the truth, to which Jesus Christ came into this world to bear witness. If it should, in the least, prevent that peace and good feeling which ever ought to exist among us, as friends and neighbors, the Author would be the first to regret it. In the declaration of religious opinion there is no restraint in this land. In the statement of undeniable facts, he does not consider himself infringing upon the rights of others, nor laying a foundation for complaint. In preparing this Discourse, he is not conscious of cherishing feelings in the least inconsistent with those of a friend, a neighbor, and a Christian. No line, in view of the judgment, could he wish blotted out. It is his privilege, however, that he should be *decided* in what effects the eternal destiny of men.

Medfield, May 12, 1832.

A. G.

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Apr. 21, 1875.

SERMON.

1 KINGS viii. 29.

“THAT THINE EYES MAY BE OPEN TOWARD THIS HOUSE NIGHT AND DAY, EVEN TOWARD THE PLACE OF WHICH THOU HAST SAID, **MY NAME SHALL BE THERE.**”

The object of the prayer which forms the basis of this discourse, is to secure the favor of God. And now, brethren, as we have been prospered in erecting this house, and as we have, for the first time, entered it to worship the Everliving God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, my inquiry is, How shall we secure the continuance of the Divine favor? In order to obtain this great and important blessing, I would say, we must practically illustrate, in a consistent manner, our belief in the doctrines of the Bible. This is the topic which I wish to illustrate and enforce.

It is very manifest that there is an intimate connexion between a person's belief and his practice; and it is equally manifest that a course of moral conduct, which meets the approbation of God, must flow from a correct belief in the doctrines of the Bible. A man's practical conduct is always regulated by the standard of action which he forms in his own mind. This standard, right or wrong, is law to him, and you may be certain his obedience to that law will never rise above what he

conceives to be its requirement. Suppose one of your neighbors believed that the laws of the land required no more honor to magistrates, than to persons in common life. That neighbor, if he was governed by his apprehensions of the law, would treat a magistrate as he would a common subject; and there would be a consistency between his belief in the law, and his conduct toward the magistrate. The argument is the same, when applied to the doctrines of the Bible. A person's practical conduct will be in conformity to the view he takes of the doctrines which God has revealed. The belief of man in the doctrines of the Bible is the motive that either prompts him to action, or lulls him to sleep on religious subjects. We find, in looking over society, that the doctrines of the Bible, or the motives to action on religious subjects, prompt some to vigorous effort—lead them to do much in the cause of the Redeemer, and enlist the warmest feelings of their hearts; and we find that the belief of others in what they think the doctrines of the Bible lulls them to sleep, and leads them to do little or nothing in the cause of benevolence. Now, why this difference? They are all alike moral agents, all equally free, all have the same Bible. But there is a difference in practical conduct on religious subjects. To what is it owing? Plainly, to their taking different views of the doctrines of the Bible—their motives to action.

Now, it is very easy to see, that a person's practical conduct before God will be right or wrong, according to the right or wrong view which he takes of the doctrines of the Bible. His acceptance before God does not depend upon the *sincerity* of his belief, but upon the *truth* which he sincerely believes. A person may sincerely believe a lie, but his sincerity will not change the lie into truth, nor renovate his selfish and depraved heart.

If these remarks are true, it follows, that there are fundamental doctrines in religion, and a belief in them must be essential to salvation.

But what are these fundamental doctrines? It is not my purpose to dwell upon them all. I shall take up but two of them. I select these, because all other doctrines in the Christian Scheme are interlocked with them. I mean the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ. The Atonement of Jesus Christ, as God manifest in the flesh, is the grand point in the Christian Scheme around which all its other doctrines revolve, and toward which they all tend in beautiful harmony. The doctrines of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, the moral depravity of man, the necessity of a change of heart, and the eternal punishment of the wicked, are all connected with the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ. I need not stop to prove this, for it is acknowledged by all the friends and opposers of Orthodoxy. Those who deny the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, usually deny the Divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit, the entire depravity of man, the necessity of a change of heart, and the eternal punishment of the wicked. This, you will find, they have frankly acknowledged in their numerous publications.* It follows, then, that a belief in the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ is essential to salvation, not only because of their importance in themselves, but because they are inseparably connected with these other doctrines. If a belief in the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ is not essential to salvation,—and if these doctrines are connected with all others that are considered fundamental, then there can be no essential doctrines in the Christian Scheme; and if there are no doctrines essential to salvation, then it does follow, beyond mistake, that it is no matter what we believe, if

* See note A.

we are only sincere. No matter whether we believe the Bible, the Koran, the Shaster, the Zendevista, or the rude fables of mythology. No matter whether we are Jews, Pagans, Mohammedans, or Christians ; and it does follow, also, that there is no connexion between a correct belief in what God has revealed, and upright conduct. If this be so, who can show the difference between virtue and vice ? who can show any fundamental difference between Christianity and Infidelity ? who can tell why God gave us the Bible ? Did God raise up and inspire holy men of old, and collect together the Bible in one volume, and command it to be sent forth over all the earth to teach poor, ignorant, wandering man that there is nothing in the blessed volume of fundamental importance ; that all sincere faith and worship secure the Divine favor ? If this be true, after having learnt that fact, you may leave the Bible, and start off upon the ocean of boundless liberality, and securely trust to some chance-coming gale, to waft you into the heavenly harbor. But can any one feel safe, who has violated God's holy and unchangeable law, as he looks forward to eternity, unless his soul is anchored to the Atonement of Jesus Christ ? But there are other reasons why these doctrines must be believed, if we take the Bible for our guide. We all doubtless believe that the Bible reveals to us only three orders of rational, intelligent beings :—God, the great First Cause, Angels, (including fallen angels,) and Men. All of our inquiries about any other intelligent being or beings amount only to conjecture. Now, to which of these three orders of beings does Jesus Christ belong ? Is he a mere man, who had no existence before the heavenly host announced his advent to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem ? He told the Jews that he existed before Abraham ; and the Apostle Paul tells us he was called

to be "an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ." And "*He* is before all things, and by him all things consist."* He is, then, something more than man. Is he an angel? The Apostle tells us in Hebrews, that Jesus Christ is so much better than the angels, that he hath obtained a more excellent name than they; and all the angels of God are commanded to worship him. The Bible nowhere tells us that there are different orders of angels; and, even if there were, no one would suppose that God would require all the lower orders of angels to worship the highest one. Jesus Christ then does not belong to the order of angels.

But do you say that you believe he is the Son of God? The term, Son of God, as used in the Bible, always means the human nature of Jesus Christ. In Luke 1:35, we read,—“And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore* that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God*. Here, then, we see the reason why the Saviour is called the Son of God is, that he was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. If, then, you have an intelligent belief of what the phrase Son of God means, you must believe it means he was a mere man. His sonship cannot be founded on his Divine nature, for in this nature, he is said to be “from everlasting.”† If he is a Son in his Divine nature, then there must have been a time when he had a beginning; and if he had a beginning, he could not have been “from everlasting.” But the revealed fact, that he is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever, settles the question that, in his Divine nature, he is not a Son. In his Divine nature he is sovereign, undivided, inde-

* John 8:58. Gal. 1:1. Heb. 1:4, 6, 8.

† Micah 5:2. literally translated “from the days of eternity.”

pendent. But others say, Jesus Christ is the first and greatest of all created beings. If Jesus Christ is a dependent, created being, it is evident from the first chapter of John's Gospel, and other parts of the Bible, that he created himself; for we there learn that *all things* were made by Jesus Christ, and that without him there was *not one thing made** that was made. If then Jesus Christ is a created being, it follows, if *he created all things*, that he created himself, which is absurd. But some say he is, *some how*, an uncreated being, to whom God delegated almighty power to create the world. If God delegated almighty power to Jesus Christ, he either retained almighty power himself, or left himself without power. No one will say the Father left himself without power. It follows, then, if this theory be true, that God delegated almighty power to Jesus Christ, and retained, at the same time, almighty power himself; and, of course, there are two almighty Beings in the universe; and if there are two almighty Beings, there are *two Gods!!* I know, indeed, that the advocates of this *invented* scheme hold to the Unity of the Godhead with all other denominations of Christians, but, as all admit that God the Father is properly the Creator, then it follows, if Jesus Christ created the world, either that he is *alone* the supreme and independent God Almighty, or there are two distinct Creators; and if there are two distinct Creators, the unity of the Godhead is destroyed. We reject this theory, not only because we find nothing of it in the Bible, but because it is palpably "*contrary to reason.*"

If we believe the Bible, we must place Jesus Christ in that order of being which is the Great First Cause. Here, resting upon the revealed fact, all is plain.†

* Literal translation of the original Greek phrase.

† See note B.

“Great is the mystery of Godliness.” “God was manifest in the flesh.” “Jesus Christ is God over all, blessed forever.”*

We know nothing of God, only by the revelation and actual exertion of his attributes. We learn from the Bible and nature, that Eternity, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, &c. are ascribed to God. By these attributes we know there is a God “in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.” We learn with equal clearness and certainty from the Bible, that all these same attributes are ascribed to Jesus Christ; and if they do not prove that Jesus Christ is the Supreme God, then we have no proof from the Bible that there is any God in the universe;† and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, whose word ever ought to be equal to demonstration, is made void through the devices and speculations of men.‡

On the other essential doctrine which I proposed to notice—the Atonement—I would observe, that you all intend to be saved, either by your good works, or by the mercy of God through Jesus Christ. If you mean to be saved by your good deeds, your actions must constantly meet the demand of God’s law. The law saith, “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” You have all sinned, and, of course, you cannot be saved by the “deeds of the law.”|| Neither can you be saved by the example of Jesus Christ. You have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and how can your imitation of the mere example of Jesus Christ cancel your debt to the laws? If, then, you cannot be saved by your exemplary deeds, how must you be saved? If at all, in some way or other, by Jesus Christ.§ It must be by

* 1 Tim. 3:16. Rom 9:5.

† See note C.

‡ Do you look to Jesus Christ to be saved? See Is. 45:9—22.

|| See Rom. 3:20—23.

§ See Acts 4:12.

his Atonement; and therefore we say a belief in this doctrine is essential to salvation; for how could a person be saved by a certain method of God's appointment, unless he believed in that method? The law of God, which you have broken, is against you, and will forever exclude you from heaven, unless you or your substitute so honor and magnify the law as to secure the end of moral government. But you cannot do this of yourselves. The law, in its original claims, makes no provision for the reception of transgressors. But Jesus Christ, the great Law Giver, has suffered and died to atone for sin, to magnify the law, to sustain public justice in the offer of salvation to sinning man. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "All we, like sheep, have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood."* The dying saint, who exclaims in the hour of dissolution, "O death, where is thy sting?" builds his sublime hopes of heaven on the atoning blood of a Mediator. We see in these doctrines the main pillars of the Christian temple. The voice that broke from heaven over the waves of Jordan tells us, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

If we have right views of the character and work of Jesus Christ, and practically illustrate our belief in a consistent manner, we shall meet the approbation of

* Rom. 10:4. 2 Cor. 5:19—21. Is. 53:5, 6. Rev. 5:9.

God. It is not sufficient for us simply to *know* our master's will. We must show to the world that the doctrines of the Bible are our standard of action, and we must act with that faith in these doctrines which admits of no doubt. Do we believe that we are all under the ruins of the fall, that without a change of heart none can see the kingdom of heaven, that God was manifest in the flesh to atone for sin? Do we believe there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust? Do we believe there will be a judgment day, when all time's population will be congregated around the great tribunal, and when God will unfold the secrets of all hearts? Do we believe there is an eternal heaven of ineffable glory, and an eternal hell of untold anguish? If we believe the Bible, we do. What then, I ask, is consistency of Christian character, in view of these doctrines? How shall we illustrate them in our daily walk and conversation, as we sojourn amid the ruins of an apostate world? How should we feel and act in view of the moral depravity of man? * Go see the wise and tender-hearted physician, when called to your neighbor, suffering under the ravages of disease. Does he linger, and tell the messenger from your suffering friend that he can do nothing, and that all efforts are useless? Oh no! He hastens, even through the darkness and storms of midnight, to the victim of disease, and does all in his power to relieve the pain and restore the full ebbings of life. But what is the disease of the body to the deeper malady of the immortal mind, which needs the balm of Gilead and the Physician there? And shall we not make efforts with the wise system of means God has committed to us to restore the ebbings of spiritual life to those who are "dead in trespasses and in sins?"

* See note D.

How should we act, in view of the promised gift of the Spirit of God, to change the heart? How does the child act when he seeks a gift from his parent which he greatly desires? Does he ask with a sleepy tone of voice, and thus show to his parent that he cares nothing about it? He continues his earnest cry till he receives the promised boon. Thus we, in our prayers, must wrestle with God like Jacob of old, even, if need be, till the morning breaketh.

How should we feel and act, in view of the Atonement of Jesus Christ? How did the prisoners in the European dungeons feel, when the philanthropic Howard came to alleviate their wretched condition? Did they cry out to their keepers, Away with him! Away with him! we will not have this man to do us good? Oh no! They received him as the friend of humanity. His memory, never to be forgotten, was engraved upon thousands of bleeding hearts. But what is the deliverance of Howard, when compared with the deliverance of Him, "Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich!" "Him who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but took upon him the form of a servant, and humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?"*

How should we act in view of an eternal state of blessedness to which God invites a ruined world? How does the emigrant act, when travelling to a distant goodly land? He never forgets the great object before him; he keeps a constant watch against danger, and avoids every path that would lead him out of the way. He equips himself every morning to facilitate his journey; he makes every thing bend to the accomplishment of his object. His thoughts are upon it, his eye is to-

* 2 Cor. 8:9. Phil. 2:5-9.

wards it, and he longs to plant his foot on the goodly soil. But what is the distant land of the emigrant compared to the heaven to which God calls the Christian pilgrim—to those pleasures at his right hand, and to the fulness of that joy in the ever blessed Presence?

If you would be consistent, act in view of the objects presented to your minds, according to their greatness and importance, from whatever worlds they come. How should we feel and act in view of an eternal hell, to which so many of our friends and neighbors, and so many thousands on thousands of our fellow-beings are exposed. How do the watchmen of the city act at deep midnight, when a fire breaks out, and when the winds of heaven are high? Do they let the soothing voice of peace, peace, float upon the breeze? Oh no! They put every thing in motion that can sound an alarm, and throw the tidings of danger to every sleeping immortal. All hands are collected and engaged to arrest the progress of the devouring element, and rescue souls from destruction. But what is the ruin of earthly dwellings, compared with the ruin of immortal souls? And shall we cry peace to the wicked, when God has said there is no peace, in time or eternity, to the wicked; but that they are like the troubled ocean when it cannot rest. The tenderest solicitude should be felt, and the most vigorous exertion made, to save our fellow-men from eternal suffering to which they expose themselves, by their violation of the law of God and rejection of the Gospel of Christ.

Once more, I would ask, how should we feel and act for the glory and honor of God, who was manifest in the flesh, to seek and to save that which was lost? How did our countrymen feel and act towards the French advocate of liberty, when he last visited our beloved land? They hailed him as the friend and younger

brother of our great Washington. All, from the tottering old man, supported by his staff, to the little child, led along by his father's hand, flocked together to do him honor. All voices were harmonious—Welcome! welcome! thou friend of man. Welcome to the land whose independence you fought to achieve. But who was Lafayette, to receive such honors? He was, indeed, our friend in time of need, and let us never refuse to do him appropriate honor. But he was a man, made of the dust on which you tread, by that great Being whom so many of you refuse to honor. We preach to you, as ambassadors for Christ,—whatever honor you bestow upon created beings, to give the highest honor and glory unto him who sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb forever and ever.

Thus have I endeavored to illustrate the sentiment, that if we would secure the favor of God, we must practically exhibit, in a consistent manner, our belief in the great doctrines of the Bible. Thus let us do, and the eyes of our God will be open night and day towards this house, dedicated to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and here he will record his name. Let us believe aright, feel and act aright in our relation to God and man, then Sabbath after Sabbath, as we resort to this sacred place with joyful hearts, we may say, with the sweet Psalmist of Israel, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

We see from this subject,

I. The necessity of having right views of the character and work of Jesus Christ. We certainly ought not to expect to meet the approbation of Jesus Christ, if we entertain essentially wrong views of his character; for it is very plain, that we shall act in our devotions to him according to our apprehensions of his character.

In all the gradations of rational existence, from God

on the throne to the lowest accountable being, we ought to acknowledge each one according to his rank in the scale of existence. "Give unto Cæsar the things that belong to Cæsar, and unto God the things that belong to God." When an earthly ruler dwells among us, if we have proper respect for him, we confess his real character, and conduct ourselves towards him just according to our view of his character. If an angel should come down to earth, encircled in heavenly light, we should acknowledge his real character; and when God comes down from the radiant ranks of heaven to dwell among us, surely we must acknowledge him as God, if we would meet his favor. Can it be possible, that Jesus Christ would be pleased, even with sincere ascriptions of praise to him as the highest of all dependent beings in the wide universe, if he is really that greatest Being, on whom all depend, from the archangel of high heaven to the reptile in the dust? Let us confess what we may, if we do not acknowledge *him* in his true character, we do not confess *him* at all; we confess a creature of imagination, whom we suppose to be him, and are really deceiving ourselves.

If we confess a part of his character, and deny that which constitutes the true glory of his character, can such a confession be acceptable in his sight? Suppose a person high in authority should send another equal to himself on an embassy to a distant people, and they should declare he was nothing but a common subject, and treat him as such, when he gave them full evidence of his real character. Could he think himself treated with proper respect? And can Jesus Christ think he receives the honor due to his name, if he is not acknowledged equal to God the Father? And will he confess those before his Father in heaven, who do not confess his true character? We are taught in the statute book

of heaven, that "all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father;" and for this very obvious reason: "He thought it no robbery to be equal with God."*

We must confess Jesus Christ too as our only deliverer from the penalty of the law whose claims we have violated. We must acknowledge that God is right in the administration of his moral government, that he is right in determining the penal consequences of sin to run parallel with the eternal existence of the transgressor.† We must see that we are in moral ruins, and that there is no eye to pity, no arm to save, but the eye and the arm of the Omnipotent Son of God. Jesus Christ came not to weaken the force of law by his Atonement. But as he moved into a rebel world, he held the law in all its flaming purity in one hand, and in the other a glorious substitute for its curse, saying, "Escape ye prisoners of hope to the strong holds in Zion, whose pillars are sprinkled with atoning blood."‡ All of my hearers who take the Bible for their guide, know that we must exercise true faith in Jesus Christ in order to gain admission into heaven. We read that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, and without faith, it is impossible to please God." Jesus Christ is always the true object of faith, for "he that *believeth not the Son* shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." If then Jesus Christ is the object of faith, how can our faith be acceptable in the sight of God, unless we have right views of the object of faith? It would be just as impossible as it would for one of us to yield obedience to the laws of our country, when we knew not what the laws were.

Let us not be found destitute of that faith in Christ which works by love, and purifies the heart, and fits for

* John 5:23. Phil. 2:6.

† See note E.

‡ See note F.

heaven. Let us not mistake here, for it takes hold on eternity. What will all things else avail us, if, when the eye of God searches our hearts, we are found destitute of this essential requisite of salvation? Will any qualities of natural goodness, will sweetness of spirit and amiableness of manners, will deeds of kindness and mercy serve us instead of faith in that eternity on whose verge we are passing the brief moments of this mortal life, or in that terrible day of final retribution, when the Son of Man in all the majesty of the Eternal Judge, and amidst the assemblage of all time's population, shall announce the changeless doom and the everlasting dwelling place of each of Adam's descendants? The pillars of heaven do not stand as firm as this great decree of heaven's unchangeable King—"He who believeth shall be saved, but he who believeth not shall be damned."

II. We learn from this subject, that the system of faith which is based on the fundamental doctrines of the Bible is *essentially different* from all other systems not based on these doctrines.

The systems are essentially different in their principles and practical bearings. All admit that there can be no agreement between the evangelical system and infidelity. The Bible has no sympathy with systems of human invention. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." And if a belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Bible is essential to salvation, then there can be no agreement between the evangelical system and other forms of Christianity, which do not recognize these doctrines. The peculiar doctrines of the Orthodox, we have seen, are connected with the Divinity and Atonement of Jesus Christ.

"The liberal system is maintained, with some modifications, by two classes of nominal Christians, the Unitarians and Universalists. The peculiar doctrines of

Universalism are, that man by nature has in his heart some moral goodness ;* that he is not required to change entirely his affections with regard to God and other beings ; and that all men, virtuous and vicious, will, in some way, be eventually saved.† The peculiar doctrines of Unitarianism are, that our Saviour is infinitely inferior to God,‡ and did not in any proper sense make an atonement for sin ; that the Holy Spirit is not a divine Person ; that man has by nature some moral goodness in his heart, and that he is not required to change entirely his affections from selfishness to benevolence. On the subject of the duration of future punishment, the Unitarians have not so generally and unequivocally declared their opinions. Some expressly deny the doctrine of endless punishment ; others have, *in their pulpits*, expressed no opinion on the subject ; nor is there any evidence that they believe the doctrine. As a denomination, no Unitarian, I presume, will censure me for saying they disbelieve the doctrine of future endless punishment.”|| If Unitarianism and Universalism are so similar,§ then the evangelical system can no more harmonize with the one than the other. It is in vain to attempt the union of principles that are so dissimilar. The practical bearings of these systems are as different as their doctrines. Professors of religion in evangelical churches deem it to be their imperious duty and delightful privilege to pray in their families ; to attend the monthly concert for prayer ; to contribute of their property to sustain the missionary cause, in elevating the degraded character of the heathen ; to unite in promoting the cause of temperance ; and practically to illustrate their principles in promoting revivals of religion. Now do the adherents of the liberal system attend, to

* Ps. 14:2, 3.

† Luke 13:3—5. Ps. 9:17.

‡ Is. 9:6. 1 John 5:20.

|| Spirit of the Pilgrims, Vol. i. p. 235.

§ See note G.

much extent, on any of these things? This question should be decided by facts alone.

Both of these systems cannot be from God. Both cannot be contained in the Bible. All parts of divine revelation are harmonious. One or the other of these systems must be dangerous in the extreme. They are directly opposite in their principles and tendency. If one is the Gospel, the other is not. That which is false is dangerous to the preacher and dangerous to the hearers.* We believe that Jesus Christ is the Supreme God. We rely alone upon his atoning blood for salvation. We worship him. But to pay religious worship to Christ is considered by Unitarians idolatry; and it would be easy to show from their writings and on their principles, that no conclusion is more just.

In a conversation on some of the fundamental doctrines of religion, Dr. Priestly once said to Professor Miller of Princeton, "I do not wonder that you Calvinists entertain and express a strongly unfavorable opinion of us Unitarians. The truth is, there neither can nor ought to be any compromise between us. If you are right, *we are not Christians at all*; and if we are right, you are *gross idolaters*."† It cannot then be a matter of indifference which system we embrace. We are going to eternity to meet Jesus Christ, as our final Judge. On the results of our probation hang everlasting concerns. When the curtain is drawn, and the soul introduced into the boundless scenes of another world, the declaration in the Revelation will be forever true: "He that is holy, let him be holy still; and he that is unjust, let him be unjust still."

III. We learn from this subject what a revival of religion is, and what promotes revivals.

* Gal. 1:6—10.

† See Dr. Miller's Sermon, at the ordination of Rev. Mr. Nevins, Baltimore.

By a revival of religion, we do *not* mean lawless fervours, a heated imagination, and furious zeal without knowledge, nor periodical turns of obedience. It does *not* consist in muscular effort, nor in vigilance to secure the mere interest of a party. Much less does it consist in opening the doors of the church so wide, that all, with whatever qualifications, may enter. But by a revival of religion we mean a course of moral conduct consistent with our belief in the great doctrines of the Bible. It is a steady adherence to truth, and a practical illustration of that truth in all the appropriate circumstances of life. It is to believe right, feel right, and act right, in our appointed sphere, under the moral government of God. It is to sympathize with the multitude of the heavenly host, whose praises over the plains of Bethlehem announced the coming of our Lord: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." It is not to make religion a mere appendage to the business of life; but it is to make *every thing we do* a necessary part of religion. Our intercourse with neighbors, our conversation, our labor, our recreation, our refreshments, our learning, our prayers, our property, our meetings, must all lend their influence to frown upon iniquity, and promote the glory of God, peace on earth, and good will among men. Ours is a time of the outpouring of the Spirit. "We see in the revivals of the day a heavenly influence which is falling like rain upon every part of our land, and which is soon to descend, we hope, upon all the earth. No scenes in our world affect us so deeply. To our apprehension, they are God's grand method, in the present and coming ages, of filling the world with the light and joy of the Gospel."

And now, I ask, on this deeply interesting occasion, do you desire a refreshing from the presence of the

Lord? Professors of religion, I put this question to you. You know what promotes revivals. The doctrines of the Gospel must be made to bear upon the conscience, through which the Holy Spirit, in *answer to your prayers*, makes his way, and subdues the heart. You must show your *active* dependence. Active, I say, for *passive* dependence has no place in the moral empire of grace. You have invited the ministers of the Gospel to come and unfold the unsearchable riches of Christ. Have you invited with more solicitude the Good Spirit from on high to come and fill all hearts with his sanctifying power? If we have not the promised gift, we labor in vain. If all of God's minister's should come and preach, and if all the angels in heaven should throw their thrilling music around the congregation; still, without the Spirit, sinners would rebel and beat their way down to ruin. We see, then, that we have all something to do. The truth must be presented as it is in Christ Jesus, and the Spirit must be prayed for with that earnestness and faith, which takes no denial. My brethren, let us take this straight onward, consistent course, and heaven's benediction will crown our efforts, and heaven's temple will resound with the joy of angels over sinners that repent.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

Many who deny these doctrines, no doubt, hold to a change in the conduct of men, and earnestly labor for the improvement of human character; but reformation in the visible appearance of men is

not regeneration by the Holy Spirit. A man may be supremely selfish, who is strictly moral in his outward character.

"You would no more consider the Holy Spirit a person, than you would consider wisdom or death a person." *Whitman's Sermon on Regeneration.* (See Acts 5:3, 4. John 16:13.)

"I have said that the great work of religion is to unfold the divine likeness within us." (Rom. 7:18.)

"I reverence human nature too much to do it violence." (Eph. 2:3.)

"The bursts of affection, the sweet smile of the new-born child, plead more eloquently its alliance with higher natures." (Ps. 58:3.) *Dr Channing's Works*, p. 413, 471.

"This text, (*Rev.* 20:10,) has also been alleged, but with little reason, in favor of what has justly been called the heart-withering doctrine of eternal torments." *Imp. Ver. of the N. Test.* p. 607.

"Many who disbelieve the doctrine of eternal punishment, are afraid to avow their opinion, lest it should weaken the restraints of religion. This is not my fear." *Bancroft's Sermons*, p. 392.

NOTE B.

It is often objected to Christ's Divinity, that it is *mysterious*. But the *revealed fact* in which our faith is demanded is not mysterious. The fact that Christ is God and Man is as *clearly stated* in the Bible, as it is stated that there were such persons as Paul and John. But you find the mystery, when you go beyond the *fact*, and ask *how it can be*, that Christ is God and Man? This is not revealed, neither is it revealed *how* God could exist without beginning; but you believe the fact as stated in the Bible. Just as far as things are revealed in the Bible, they are clear and definite, and there is no mystery as far as the revelation goes. How presumptuous for such creatures as we are, encompassed with ignorance, to attempt to comprehend the Godhead! (Job. 11,7, 8.)

NOTE C.

The Bible assures us that Jesus Christ is eternal, almighty; for he created the world and all things; that he is every where present, that he knows all things, that he will raise the dead, and pass sentence of judgment upon the congregated millions of moral agents, from all worlds, in the last day; and that he is the proper object of worship to all the angels of God. Isaiah calls him the "mighty God;" the Apostle Paul calls him the "great God;" and the Apostle John calls him the "true God." Now I ask, can it be possible, that Jesus Christ is a created, dependent being? (John 10:30. Rev. 1:17, 18; 2:23. Matt. 28:18. John 2:19. Heb. 1:8; 3:4. 1 Tim. 3:16. Col. 2:9, 10. Eph. 1:22, 23.)

NOTE D.

We do not mean by depravity, that we are accountable for any thing done by other beings, before we were born, nor that our na-

ture is itself sinful, nor that depravity is some mysterious thing apart from human consciousness, incapable of definition ; if it was, it never could be made a matter of human or divine legislation : but we mean by depravity, an active, settled purpose of mental alienation from God ; the sinner's free choice to do wrong while the authority of God is pressing upon him to do his duty. All men are entirely destitute of holiness till regeneration. (Ps. 58:3. Jer. 17:9. John 5:42. Rom. 7:18.)

NOTE E.

That the wicked are punished eternally is a clear doctrine of the Bible, and appears to us perfectly just. The word everlasting, which is applied to the endless existence of God and the endless happiness of the righteous, is also applied to the future punishment of the wicked. The word everlasting, it is true, is used in a few instances, to denote *long duration*, as the "everlasting hills." But the word is never used in a limited sense, unless there is something in the *nature of the subject* to which it is applied to limit it. What is there in the nature of future punishment to limit the word any more than in the nature of future happiness? Endless punishment is just, on the principle of endless transgression. That crime and punishment should run parallel with each other is a principle of justice, seen in every form of government. Eternal punishment is threatened *as a consequence* of the sins of this life. The sinner's rebellion here lays the foundation for his eternal hostility to God. If he should cease to sin in the future world, he would either possess no moral character, or he would be holy. If he possessed no moral character, he would not be a subject of moral government. If he should become holy, he would have the elements of heaven. But the sinner will *continue to sin* in the eternal world, and therefore his eternal punishment must be *just and inevitable*. If the great mass of men, with the restraints of the Gospel, sin against God, will they not much more rebel in the future world, where these restraints are taken off from them? The Bible settles the question. "The wicked is driven away [at his death] in his wickedness." "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." "They shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." (Matt. 25:46. 2 Thes. 1:9. Rev. 20:10. 2 Pet. 2:17. Rev. 14:3.)

NOTE F.

When we say that the Atonement of Jesus Christ was a substitute for the curse of the law, we do not mean that he endured the penalty of the law, nor that he *inclined* the Father to be merciful. The Atonement was the effect of God's mercy, not its cause. The Atonement was the grand expedient to sustain the principles of moral government in the pardon of repenting sinners.

NOTE G.

That these two systems are fast mingling into one, is evident from

facts. The Universalists and Unitarians in the town of Mendon have recently united in the settlement of a Universalist minister. A part of the council at that installation were Unitarian clergymen. There are many in both of these denominations, who openly declare that nothing should prevent their fellowship. The main difference seems to be, that one denomination are more plain in unfolding their sentiments than the other.

The author is happy to state that his views of truth expressed in this sermon perfectly accord with those of Dr. PRENTISS, the former Orthodox pastor of this people, whose memory is still cherished with the liveliest feelings of affection and respect. A few extracts from his manuscript and printed sermons will show the coincidence.

"Correct views of the character of Christ as a Saviour are very necessary in order to *proper dispositions* toward him. There is an established connexion between faith and holiness.—If our apprehensions of Christ be low and inferior, we can have but *little confidence in him* as a Saviour. Divine power and divine perfections are attributed to him. Divine characters and divine titles are ascribed to him, which cannot belong to any mere creature, *however exalted his rank* in the scale of existence." *Sermon on Matt. 22:41—46.*

"Among the doctrines of Christianity, or the things which relate to Christ, that of *Atonement by his blood* makes the principal figure. The value and efficacy of his *atoning blood* constitutes his plea for the pardon of guilty men.—Teach not your hearers to rest satisfied in *unregenerate morality*, but set before them the nature and necessity of that renovation of heart, without which they cannot become subjects of Christ's kingdom.—The terrors of the Lord are to be improved to alarm the apprehension of degenerate mortals.—Christ is God as well as man.—We are taught to attribute a change of heart to the efficacious operation and influence of the Holy Ghost." *Ordination Sermons.*

"As death leaves us, so judgment will find us. The grave will purge out no corruption. As we lie down in the dust, so we shall rise, either vessels of mercy prepared unto glory, or vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.—Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire—and some shall go away into everlasting punishment.—These are very plain and positive declarations of Scripture." *Sermon on Rev. 20:11—15.*

"The man who is not deeply affected with the mercy of God and Christ, it may be fairly concluded, has never realized his own *lost and perishing condition* as a sinner, nor seen his need of some *effectual Deliverer*. He is probably asleep in sin, or building his prospects for futurity on some foundation, independent of that which God has laid in Zion. It is difficult to say which is worst, the situation of a person secure in a state of carnality, or of one who builds his hopes of happiness on a *wrong foundation*." *Sermon printed in 1813.*







